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TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: WESTERN SAHARA: GOM ON USE OF MOROCCAN PASSPORTS
FOR CBM SEMINARS

REF: RABAT 1394

Classified By: DCM Wayne J. Bush for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Poloffs met July 25 with Nasser Bourita, MFA Director of UN and International Organizations, to discuss the GOM position that Sahrawis from the Western Sahara who participate in potential non-political seminars in the future should travel on Moroccan passports. Reiterating comments made by MFA Secretary General Omar Hilale on July 18 (reftel), Bourita explained that participants from the Western Sahara should travel using their Moroccan passports, not a UN "manifest" as described in the UNHCR concept paper. Bourita noted that the family visits programs and the potential non-political seminars are two "very different" activities, emphasizing that the seminars are not strictly humanitarian activities, as is the case for the family visits. (NOTE: While UNHCR might understand these to be humanitarian, the GOM does not. END NOTE.) Morocco has accepted the use of UN-issued travel documents for the family visits program because the destination is Tindouf, which would not be the case with the seminars, Bourita said. Bourita underscored that the seminars could potentially take place in Portugal or Spain, not Tindouf; therefore, participants should use Moroccan passports.

¶2. (C) Bourita argued that the proposed non-political seminars are not a "popular" CBM, but target elite and intellectuals. Bourita believed that the seminar participants will likely demand to use their Moroccan passports; more so than family visits participants. Another difference that would make it more difficult for the GOM to accept the use of UN-issued travel documents, Bourita explained, is that participants would be asked to attend a seminar, whereas with the family visits the participants have requested to take part in the program. Bourita added that participants would not travel to the seminars via UNHCR transportation. In closing, Bourita said UNHCR did not have a problem with the GOM concerns about passports when discussed in Geneva.

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